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SHAKESPEARE—MUSICIAN

By R. D. WELCH¹

THE abundance of musical reference in Shakespeare is misleading. Its very bulk—some five hundred passages, according to Naylor (Edward M. Naylor, "Shakespeare and Music")—imposes upon the credulity both of those who have no historical perspective on the English music of Shakespeare's time, and those who are predisposed to find that the great poet was a great musician as well. The amount of material for musical study, the elaborate elucidation much of it requires before its sense is plain to the modern reader, the insight of the poet into the musician's temperament and technic, his knowledge of instruments and of singing and of all the special terminology that goes with music making—all this may mislead students into believing Shakespeare at heart a musician and a very learned one.

I recall hearing, as a boy, a lecture on "Shakespeare; a Great Moral Teacher." The speaker drew for his audience of High School students a picture of Shakespeare that, if I correctly remember it, was something of a cross between a Hebrew prophet and a Presbyterian elder. Quotation came to him trippingly on the tongue; such plays as were chosen for illustration were shown as focusing upon moral sentiments. All this missed none of its effect with the impressionable; Shakespeare, in our libraries and in our hearts, should have place next the Bible; "To thine own self be true" was but the counterpart of "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you." And then I began to read Shakespeare for myself. (I have been grateful to that lecturer on many accounts.) But the destiny that shapes our ends determined that I was not to have a one-sided view of Shakespeare. The first play I read was *Antony and Cleopatra* ("So different from the home life of our own dear queen"!).

Nothing could be farther from the truth than to consider Shakespeare one of the great musicians of his time, or even to impute to him a preoccupation with music in any sense more special than his interest in law or medicine or horticulture. All was grist that came to his mill: music served him to turn a pun, to provide an apt figure, to grace a pretty scene, or to fill an

¹Read at the Shakespeare Celebration, Smith College, April, 1922.

interlude. And in every instance of Shakespeare's use of musical allusion it is squarely rooted in the popular musical practices of his time. He takes here, as with other subjects, what the current, popular practice and superstition of his age provided him. That he took more liberally, that he used more accurately than his fellows is only saying that Shakespeare was Shakespeare, here as elsewhere (or Bacon, if you prefer). But of musical professionalism there is not a trace.

The spirit that was moving upon the mind of the learned musician of his day seems not to have shadowed Shakespeare with its wing. The distinctions between the popular and the learned musician of Shakespeare's England are not difficult to trace. The one, then as now, was bent on pleasing his fellows with what was easy of understanding and what was wanted, who could play a "merry dump" if need were, "sounding" generally for very little silver. The learned musician, on the other hand, was schooled in a technic and imbued with a purpose that made his art intelligible only to those trained to follow him. The highest form of learned music was the madrigal, an unaccompanied vocal piece for several voices, each singing an elaborate, independent part. This form was a child of The Renaissance. English and Italian composers turned it to either sacred or secular uses. In 1603 twenty-six of the most important English composers published "The Triumphs of Oriana," a collection of madrigals. Originally planned for publication in 1601, its appearance was deferred until 1603, probably because the Queen to whom the work was dedicated was displeased at the name "Oriana" by which she is called in the work. The important point for us here is that the musical form in which the most famous composers of the period wrote for the glory of their queen and the immortalization of themselves was the madrigal. The English madrigal is one of the most distinguished achievements of pure vocal music, and certain of the English madrigalists, notably Weelkes, Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Morley, John Bull, Wilbye, though their works are rarely heard now outside England, are among the greatest composers England has produced, all contemporaries of Shakespeare.

Yet Shakespeare seems to have been either unaware of or uninterested in the work of these men. In all the thirty-two plays in which musical reference is made in the text, the word "madrigal" occurs but once, and in that instance it may and probably does refer, not to the madrigal, technically speaking, but to the madrigal as a love ditty or a pastoral song. It is Sir Hugh

Evans who uses the word ("Merry Wives," III) in his nervous paraphrase of what was undoubtedly a well-known song:

To shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

It seems unlikely that the reference here is to the unconscious part-singing of the melodious birds; more probably it confirms the out-of-doors atmosphere of the poem.

Nor did the instrumental music of Shakespeare's contemporary masters of music seem to interest him more. The chief instrumental form of the serious musician, the "fancy" as it was called, made, in a way, after the model of the madrigal, is, like the madrigal, mentioned but once in Shakespeare's text.

With Dr. Naylor's suggestion, therefore, in the introduction to his "Shakespeare and Music," that Shakespeare's use of music shows "the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure," we must take a certain grain of issue. Shakespeare was not concerned with music "begot of thought." His "abstracts and brief chronicles" fail to record the pressure toward a conscious art of music.

II

Of the popular music of his time, however, the instruments, the kinds of songs sung familiarly at fireside, in tavern, or by serenading swain, of the temperament and the vanity of the musically minded, Shakespeare had a detailed and exact knowledge. No other literary artist has used musical allusion so much as he; none has fallen into so few of the pitfalls that music seems to dig for the unwary poet. One whole volume has been compiled—and, no doubt, others might be—of the treachery of music with the poet. Browning is Shakespeare's only fellow poet whose frequent reference to musical technicalities will bear scrutiny. Imagination, in the poet's mind, it would seem, declines to be yoked to a sense of fact when it deals with music.

The musical antiquarian, tracing Shakesperean references to their sources in contemporary practice, is able to find hardly half a dozen slips in accuracy, and the fault may lie in some cases with the inadequacy of research, not with Shakespeare. The most apparent misuse of musical technicalities is that in the 128th sonnet, in which the poet sighs to change place with the virginal upon which his lady plays.

How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers, and thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy these jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which would that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!
To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more blest than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

Here, in the fifth and sixth lines, and the last two, there is a plain mistake in the use of terms. The jack is not a key, as the context of the poem would imply. The jack was at the opposite end of the lever from the exposed portion, or key. It corresponds, though differing totally from it in mechanical structure, to the hammers of the modern pianoforte. Not only would the lady have been forced into a most uncomfortable position, but it would have been shockingly bad for the instrument to have allowed the jacks to "kiss the tender inward" of her hand. Clearly, Shakespeare meant "key" when he wrote "jack," and his contemporaries, using the virginal for metaphor and simile, refer to "key" and "jack" more accurately than he. But this is innocuous, and, incidentally, adds a bit of evidence to my thesis that Shakespeare was not informed about, nor apparently interested in, any other than the wholly popular music of his time. The virginal, though in common use among gentlewomen, was in no sense a popular instrument, in no such general use as is the modern pianoforte, its descendant. Shakespeare makes but one other reference to it. Leontes ("Winter's Tale," I, 2), seeing his queen touch the hand of Polixenes, jealously mutters: "Still virginaling upon his palm?"

III

This accurate first-hand knowledge of the contemporary popular music and the easy, familiar playing with musical technicalities, especially in the comedies, suggest that both Shakespeare and his audiences knew their music intimately. No modern playwright would risk this building of metaphor and characterization, or turning a whole scene, upon musical allusion, even

were he, himself, sufficiently conversant with music to do so. His modern audience would not follow; his fine turns would be lost. The Elizabethan had not, as have generations subsequent to the eighteenth century, given over his music making to a special class. Without established institutions for the promulgation of musical culture, with no conservatories, no opera houses, no supervision of public school music, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced a musical majority. Every man's education embraced a certain musical proficiency in singing and playing, learned casually and informally, as every man now knows (or conceals his ignorance if he does not know) the technicalities of base ball.

High or low, rich or poor, in palace or in pot-house, the Elizabethan, had he any voice at all, delighted in singing "catches." The "catch" is a kind of round ("canon," musicians call it); "Scotland's Burning" and "Three Blind Mice" are the last popular flickers of a once jolly, heart-warming flame. One voice started a tune. Another, at the proper moment began it again, the first one continuing. A third joined, when his turn came, a fourth, a fifth, all singing the same tune, no two of them in the same measure at once. Someone was always beginning, someone always ending, a third shouting the highest notes, a fourth growling the lowest, round and round, faster, gayer. . . . "Shall we rouse the night-owl in a catch that will draw three souls out of one weaver? shall we do that?" ("Twelfth-Night," II, 3).

A catch is the way to let off the bibulous merriment of Sir Toby and his tipsy friends; the catch, a vulgar, ale-house amusement. Malvolio's rebuke reproves the company for forgetting the proprieties: "My masters, are you mad, or what are you? Have you no wit, manners, nor honesty, but to gabble like tinkers at this time of night? Do you make an ale-house of my lady's house, that ye squeak out your cozier's catches without mitigation or remorse of voice? Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time in you?" ("Twelfth-Night," II, 3). The withering sting in that reproof is in the reference to "cozier's catches," for a cozier was not only a common sort of artizan, a tailor or a cobbler, but a poor one, one who botched his work.

This one scene ("Twelfth-Night," II, 3) has in it enough of musical reference to warrant a volume of explanation. The lovely lyric "Oh, Mistress Mine," the snatches of popular songs such as "Peg a Ramsey," "Farewell, Dear Love," the play on "catch," have sent the commentators and the antiquarians on long researches, the results of which may be read in a number of books

(though in this branch of scholarship as in others one must be on guard against the emphatic repetition, from generation to generation, of flagrant errors). Without, however, laboring each reference, it is clear that here is evidence of a familiar, intimate knowledge of music on the part both of the poet and audience, else the scene could not have been so written nor could it have been enjoyed.

Take one part of it, just after Malvolio has told the roisterers that his lady would, in case they mend not their manners, be glad to bid them farewell. What follows for ten lines is taken from Robert Jones' "First Booke of Ayres" (printed 1601). The scene and its music run as follows:

Sir Toby

Fare - well, dear heart, since I must needs be gone.

(Maria. Nay, good Sir Toby.) **Clown**

His eyes do snew, his days are al - most done.

Sir Toby

But I will nev - er die.

Clown

Sir To - by, there you lie.

Sir Toby

Shall I bid him go?

Clown

What an if you do?

Sir Toby

Shall I bid him

A musical score for a clown's song. The vocal line is in soprano clef, and the piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The lyrics are: "go, and spare not? Oh, no, no, no, no, no, you dare not." The piano part includes several grace notes and a fermata over the word 'not.'

"The absolute fidelity to nature of this entire scene is remarkable; it is the half-drunken man, exactly as one may find him to-day, whose readiest vent of high spirits is in song; nothing can stop him, nothing can check his torrent of fragmentary harmony." (Elson, page 215.)

Another pastime for those who sat in company over their work or their ale was adding improvised melodies while a well-known tune was being sung. Undergraduates are moved in much the same way when they add "close harmony" to an otherwise innocent ditty. Only, the Elizabethan made separate, distinct melodies to accompany his given song. This practice was known as "adding a descant to a ground," the descant being the improvised song, the "ground" the given tune. To do this adequately presupposed practice and instruction, and no gentleman could hold up his head among his fellows and not come off fairly well at a descant. Sometimes the descant was written out and parts handed around at a gathering. These written descants were called "prick-songs," the song being printed or "pricked" (as the term went). Each man or woman was assumed able to read off his or her part fluently. Not even in the company of professed musicians to-day would such a game be proposed; its chances of success would be too lugubrious. "He fights as you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance and proportion," explains Mercutio, telling Benvolio of Tybalt's skill with the sword ("Romeo and Juliet," II, IV). Tybalt is a ready, accurate fighter, as Benvolio, being a gentleman, was singer of prick-song. It is a description of Tybalt's skill delivered in terms that Benvolio understands, and in terms that the audience understands. Likewise, Lucetta's impudence is not lost on her hearers when she tells Julia ("Two Gentlemen of Verona," I, 2):

Nay, now you are too flat,
And mar the concord with too harsh a descant,

meaning that Julia is pushing her anger, under which she conceals her impatience, a bit too far. 'Tis a pretty enough tune,

"melodious, would you sing it," Lucetta observes, but Julia's added melody of irritation is a descant too harsh.

This scene, like that from "Twelfth-Night" which we have looked at, is compact of musical allusion, references whose meaning we must laboriously search out, but which must, if the humor reached its mark, have been familiarly known to Shakespeare's auditors. Shakespeare makes so frequent and so pointed use of the technical language of singing that conjecture easily runs to the conclusion that he was a trained singer. The music lesson scene from the "Taming of the Shrew" (Act III, 1), so abounding in the technicalities of singing and of lute playing as to be practically meaningless unless the sense of the terms be cleared up,—this scene, with the others we have quoted from "Twelfth-Night," and the 3rd scene of the IVth Act of "The Winter's Tale," is enough to introduce a modern reader to a quite intimate picture of Elizabethan popular music.

It is with instruments as we have seen it to be with songs and singing. The lute, unwieldy and difficult to keep in tune; the viol, either singly or in "consort" with others; the pipes (chiefly the recorder)—these were popular instruments on which every man in his leisure might try his hand. Barber shops and taverns were supplied with lute, cittern or viol or other instrument for the amusement of the waiting customer, as now barber and dentist and physician enliven the tedium of the waiting client by dingy, coverless magazines of 1895. Morose, in Ben Johnson's "Silent Woman," complains of the wife he has taken at Cutbeard, the barber's, recommendation: "That cursed barber, I have married his cittern that is common to all men." And an eighteenth-century poem runs:

In former times 't hath been upbraided thus
That barber's music was most barbarous.

Out of this popular knowledge of instruments Shakespeare has made many lines, some of them very beautiful. Take, for instance, the whole scathing rebuke which Hamlet delivers to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ("Hamlet," III, 2). Its point lies in the comparison of himself with recorders. "'Sblood! do you think I am easier to be played upon than a pipe?" Immediately, in the next line, he changes the figure from pipe to lute when he concludes: "Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me." He puns on the word "fret," technically a little mark on the neck of a lute or viol to show the player where his fingers should be placed.

In Hortensio's account of the stormy music lesson ("Shrew," II, 1) there is punning on the word "fret" and other humor turned on musical words:

"What," asks Baptista, "will my daughter prove a good musician?"
 "I think," replies the abused Hortensio, "she'll sooner prove a soldier;
 Iron may hold with her, but never lutes."
 "Why, then thou canst not break her to the lute?"
 "Why, no; for she hath broke the lute to me.
 I did but tell her she mistook her frets,
 And bow'd her hand to teach her fingering,
 When, with a most impatient devilish spirit,
 'Frets, call you these?' quoth she: 'I'll fume with them':
 And, with that word, she struck me on the head,
 And through the instrument my pate made way;
 And there I stood amazed for awhile,
 As on a pillory, looking through the lute;
 While she did call me rascal fiddler,
 And twangling Jack; with twenty such vile terms,
 As she had studied to misuse me so."

Full of evil portent and aptly drawn is the metaphor in which Iago mutters his dark purposes. Othello and Desdemona are at the summit of their happy trust in one another.

Desdemona: The heavens forbid
 But that our loves and comforts should increase,
 Even as our days do grow!

Othello: Amen to that, sweet powers!—
 I cannot speak enough of this content,
 It stops me here; it is too much of joy:
 And this, and this, the greatest discords be (*kissing her*)
 That e'er our hearts shall make!

Iago: O, you are well tuned now!
 But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
 As honest as I am."

To anyone who has touched a stringed instrument, the discord that results from setting down the pegs by which the strings are tuned will be so evident that Iago could hardly have chosen a figure more painful to suggest his dark designs.

IV

We must not stop over many of these references to musical instruments. More important matters await us. But we should be neglecting some of the most striking passages in the plays were we to pass over a few scenes in which the turning-point of the

action is expressed in musical terms. The most important of such scenes occurs in "Romeo and Juliet." The immediate cause of the street quarrel between Romeo and Tybalt is the accusation by Tybalt that Mercutio "consorts" with Romeo: "Mercutio, thou consort'st with Romeo" ("Romeo and Juliet," III, 1). The testy Mercutio, punning on the word 'consort,' twists it to mean "play together upon instruments" as did musicians. He at once associates this idea with musicians of a despised sort, to be found in taverns and pot-houses. "Consort!" he cries, "What, dost thou make us minstrels?"—insulted by his own construction of the word as we might be were we called, contemptuously, "circus clowns." "An thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords: here's my fiddlestick" (drawing his sword). Mercutio, looking for trouble, finds it in a musical pun.

We need but remark, in passing, that Shakespeare is as care-free about musical as other anachronisms. Playing in consort, or concerted playing, was not a familiar pastime of Mercutio's fourteenth-century fellow citizens as it was of Shakespeare's sixteenth-century friends. In none of the plays does Shakespeare have a qualm about transplanting Elizabethan popular music into whatever land or time pleased him. He who could give Bohemia a seacoast and Venice confiscatory law against the Jews, could not be troubled about musical anachronisms.

Another cogent set of musical allusions is that in the speech of Richard II in the last of his scenes. Hearing music, Richard thus bewails his feebleness in statecraft:

Ha! ha! keep time: how sour sweet music is
When time is broke, and no proportion kept!
So is it in the music of men's lives.
And here have I the daintiness of ear
To check time broke in a disorder'd string;
But, for the concord of my state and time,
Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.

The pertinence of this illusion needs no commentary.

Before leaving these evidences of a familiar knowledge of popular music on the part of both Shakespeare and his audiences we may look for a moment at some of these lines in which the poet reckons a skill in music among details indicative of culture and education. We should not, however, be deceived by that oft-repeated rhapsody of Lorenzo's: "The man that hath no music in himself. is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils." This may or may not have been Shakespeare's opinion. Remember, Lorenzo was in a particularly romantic frame of mind

that moonlit night, and moreover, his lady had just said that she was never merry when she heard sweet music ("Merchant of Venice," V, 1). Lesser poets than Shakespeare have successfully thought themselves into the minds of their creations. Recall how Byron, in "Manfred" (III, IV, 1), declared his love of solitude and night:

For the night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man.

And Byron's nights are not traditionally thought of as spent in lonely watching on the mountain top!

On the other hand, Shakespeare does elsewhere, in characterizing the crafty and the cruel, account the lack of music a bit of evidence:

He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men: he loves no plays
As thou dost, Antony, he hears no music. . . .
(*"Julius Cæsar," I, 2.*)

We may possibly have here evidences of a good character as Shakespeare appraised them—but, be it remarked, good character in an Elizabethan, not a Roman!

Elsewhere are numerous mentionings of music as a part of good breeding.

. . . trained
In music, letters; who hath gained
Of education all her grace,
Which makes her both the heart and place
Of general wonder.

Such is Gower's enumeration of lovely Marina's charms ("Pericles," IV, Gower). And Othello, in jealous torment, remembers the graces of Desdemona: "I do but say what she is: so delicate with her needle; an admirable musician: O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear." (*"Othello," IV, 2.*)

While we hurry over these references to the need of music in the well-bred mind, we may give a passing glance at what may be designated as Shakespeare's philosophy of music.

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that surfeiting
The appetite may sicken and so die.
(*"Twelfth-Night," I, 1.*)

Lines that grow threadbare with much quoting, the hint in them is not yet exhausted by playwright and producer. The love scene

is, to our own day, not commonly without its accompaniment of soft and distant music.

“Give me some music,” demands the impatient Cleopatra, “moody food of us that trade in love.” (*“Antony and Cleopatra,” II, 5.*) There is an indubitable mystery in the effect of music on the spirit of man, whether or not he be in love. Primitive peoples have recognized this power in their use of music with religious rites.

Music oft hath such a charm
To make bad good, and good provoke to harm.
(*“Measure for Measure,” IV, 1.*)

And the cultivated man, likewise, liberated from superstition, has his philosophy of the place of music in human affairs.

Preposterous ass, that never read so far
To know the cause why music was ordained!
Was it not to refresh the mind of man
After his studies or his usual pain?
(*“Taming of the Shrew,” III, 1.*)

A text there, let me observe: “Music was ordained to refresh the mind of man after his studies,” pertinent to the argument about the place of music in academic curricula!

V

While we are busy with the elucidation of obscurities in musical allusion in Shakespeare’s plays or are trying to read out of and in to his several texts philosophies which he may or may not have put there, we come upon at least two speeches, directed at that unstable mixture of pride and humility known as the musical temperament, which need no explanation. These two speeches alone advise us that the poet had been tried in patience and wearied in spirit, even as you and I, by the apologetic vanity of singer and player when asked to perform. Somewhere in the bright lexicon of counsels to amateur musicians these speeches might well be written down as mottos for behavior. It is Jaques, he who claimed he had not “the musician’s melancholy, which is fantastical” (*“As You Like It,” IV, 1.*), who provides us with a cold observation that might, with salutary effect, be repeated often in the company of musicians. Amiens, requested to continue his song, apologizes: “My voice is ragged; I know I cannot please you.” To which Jaques pithily observes: “I do not desire you to please me, I do desire you to sing.” And the first Page,

in the last act of the same play (V, 3), gives hearty advice, which is useful to us: "Shall we clap into 't roundly, without hawking, or spitting, or saying 'we are hoarse'; which are the only prologues to a bad voice?"

VI

There is but one aspect of the study of Shakespeare's lyrics that I wish to touch on. The study of the lyrics is, moreover, chiefly a literary, not a musical subject. Many of them, perhaps all of them, were written to fit tunes well known to Shakespeare's public; popular songs, the originals of which have, in part, been unearthed. Some lyrics, to be sure, were given settings by contemporary composers. But the popular musical idiom is evident in the structure of them all.

There emerges, however, from a study of the whole body of the lyrics and of their uses in the plays, a question bearing on the most part important musical development in modern times. It may be briefly stated thus: Did Shakespeare have any of the feeling for the close union of music and drama, so strongly felt by his great Italian contemporary, Tasso, that led to the origin of opera?

Modern music owes its initial impulse to the poet. It was the poet and the amateur of Italy in the late sixteenth century, who, half consciously, half unwittingly, released music from the impasse of ecclesiastical tradition. The crucial event was the search by the Florentine dilettanti, gathered about Giovanni Bardi, for a dramatic speech. Primarily, the concern of this group of scholars and poets was the reconstruction of what they imagined to have been the method of delivery of Greek drama. They sought to revive the past: their success lay in sending a new stream of life into the future which still flows with strong current. Instrumental music, solo singing, modern harmony, and the concert attitude, have drawn their nourishment from that stream.

That the source of this new current should have been in Italy, rather than in France, Germany, or even England, is the more surprising since in no country was tradition in musical usage stronger than in Italy. Palestrina, the musical head of the church, had but recently rebuked those who sought to employ music for other purposes than "the service of the most high God." The ecclesiastical tradition, powerfully constrained by Flemish teachings, prevailed wherever music was seriously cultivated, whether in the church or out of it.

In Italy, as in other European countries, music had, from earliest Christian times, been loosely associated with drama. The Mystery and Miracle plays included popular songs. In the 16th century, in order to effect a closer union of music and drama, the Italians had invented the madrigal play. These plays, proceeding in a series of madrigals, were, of course, dramatically absurd. When, for instance, one character appeared alone, three or four others stood at the sides and sang with him in order that the necessary voice-parts might be present.

The complete rupture with all existing conventions governing musical speech was brought about by the poet, not by the musician.

It was fortunate for the cause that the count (Bardi) and his friends had at heart that among their coterie of artists and amateurs they numbered only two, or at most three, professional musicians. The remainder of this Art and Historical society consisted of nobles, patricians, savants, improvisatori and actors. If the professed musician had predominated, we have not much doubt that the laity would never have had the courage to override the acknowledged masters in the art, and set at naught all grammar and tradition as they were compelled to do and did do. (Naumann: *Hist. of Music*, Vol. I.)

This new dramatic speech—the supposed revival of Greek cantillation—was effected in the “stile recitativo,” or reciting style, which permitted the solo voice to follow the sense and the intonation suggested by the text. Out of this “stile recitativo” opera quickly developed. And opera had in it the seeds of modern music.

Is there any evidence that Shakespeare, the most obviously musical of dramatic poets living at this moment, so critical in the subsequent development of music—is there reason for believing that he sensed or employed any means for bringing the two arts closely together? Here is a question to be discussed on the grounds of internal evidence alone. Shakespeare makes no direct statements on the subject, though the sonnet in “The Passionate Pilgrim,” “If Music and Sweet Poetry agree,” is often cited “even in Germany,” says Elson (“Shakespeare in Music,” page 93), “as a proof of Shakespeare’s appreciation of the intimate relations of poetry and music.” This sonnet, however, is, I believe, generally considered the work of Richard Barnsfield. Moreover, were this sonnet genuine Shakespeare we should not have a very definite hint from him as to his view of the agreement of the two arts:

If Music and Sweet Poetry agree
As they must needs, the Sister and the Brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lov'st the one and I the other,

.....
One God is God of both, as poets feign.

This brother and sisterly agreement was not enough for the musical dramatist. One God might be God of fairly disparate offspring—witness the progeny of Jove!

If the musical reference in the plays be studied as a whole, with a view to its relation to the text, it will be found to fall into three fairly well defined classes. First, there are the stage directions. These are, commonly, such indications as "Flourish" or "Flourish of Trumpets or of Cornets." "Alarum" and "Alarum with Excursions" (excursions meaning parties of men running about) are frequently used, and there are numerous indications of instruments, such as, "Trumpets," "Trumpets sounded within." These directions are almost without exception indications of the entries of royal or other important persons, or accompaniments to fighting (for detailed, statistical account of these matters, see Naylor: "Shakespeare and Music"). "Music" or "Music within," or "Singing," are also used.

These references to music, however, do not help us in our present enquiry. Music of the sort indicated by these directions would be pertinent to the text simply on account of association in the minds of the hearers. Fanfares, horns, alarums, all suggest military operations or regal pageantry. In a sense they constitute a kind of audible stage setting.

The second classification of musical references is one which we have already examined in brief detail. The allusions to musical instruments or musical technicalities in the text as a basis for metaphor, simile or punning constitute a kind of musical atmosphere without being necessarily very closely allied to the meaning of the scene in question.

Lastly, there are the lyrics and the directions for songs. This class of references implies a far greater body of actual music than the others. As I have suggested, the bulk of this music was simply adaptations of popular music or songs written in the popular idiom. This is essentially no more intimate an association of music and drama than had been effected centuries before in the popular plays, or than was in current practice in the German *Singspiel* or in the use of Vaudeville in French popular plays or in the Sacre Rappresentazioni in Italy. Of music

designed especially to fit the particular spirit of a text, or of a true musical declamation approaching the “stile recitativo,” we have no traces in Shakespeare.

We, have, however, strong evidence that Shakespeare grew into an increasingly exact appreciation of the unity of his lyrics with the spirit of the scenes in which they appear. Had he been so sensitive a musician as has in divers places been alleged, it seems reasonable to suppose he would have demanded a more appropriate music for his plays.

Examine a few lyrics and their settings chosen from the early and the late plays, and this growing sense of the unity of song and scene becomes apparent. In “Love’s Labours Lost” the references to ballads and dances indicate pieces well known to Shakespeare. Dr. Johnson thinks that a song is apparently lost from the third act where a stage direction indicates singing. But lyrics in the present form of the play come at the end, and have little other connection with the text than to give it a jolly conclusion. One of them:

The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men; for then sings he,
 Cuckoo;
 Cuckoo, cuckoo: O word of fear,
 Unpleasing to a married ear!

does, to be sure, have slight reference to the celibate vows of Ferdinand and his friends, vows sworn to and broken within the action of the play. And the second lyric, following the first immediately, sings the joys of domesticity:

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick, the shepherd, blows his nail.

The lyric in the “Two Gentlemen of Verona,” “Who is Sylvia,” so well known to us in Schubert’s setting, has, indeed, a slightly closer connection with its scene than the two just quoted with the play in which they occur. Sylvia—a character in the piece—is serenaded in terms flatteringly personal to her. This loose connection with plot and characters is also found in “Under the Greenwood Tree” (“As You Like It,” II, 5), in “Will you buy any tape” (“Winter’s Tale,” IV, 3), “Sigh no more ladies, sigh no more” (“Much Ado,” II, 2), “Tell me, where is fancy bred” (“Merchant of Venice,” III, 2), and “Take, O take those lips away” (“Measure for Measure,” IV, 1).

There is, however, no small number of lyrics that have not even this loose connection with their scenes. “Hark, hark,

the lark" ("Cymbeline," II, 3), "O, Mistress Mine" ("Twelfth-Night," II, 3), and "It was a lover and his lass" ("As You Like It," IV, 2), these lyrics, and others that might be listed, are decoration—pleasant diversions in their scenes.

But when we come to a play which is among the last, namely, "The Tempest," we find a unity of plot and lyric and musical allusion far greater than in any other play. "The Tempest" almost induces us to believe that its author sensed the possibilities of a play in music—*Opera in musica*, as the Italians called it. Certainly it is a very striking example of the use of music in a play. Rarely, if ever, has music been used incidentally in a play with greater cogency or more apt suggestiveness. The atmosphere of mystery and magic is suffused with music:

The isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again. . . .
(“Tempest,” III, 2.)

Light, whose source we cannot trace, is full of mystery: much more so music, since it not only suggests the supernatural, but speaks to the emotions as well. "Singing," "Soft and solemn music," are often indicated in the stage directions, and Ariel rides continually on the wings of song. Moreover, there is not a lyric in the whole play that is not an integral part of the action and atmosphere. Ariel, invisible, leading Ferdinand to the part of the island which Prospero has indicated, goes before him singing:

Come unto these yellow sands (I, 2),

and answering Ferdinand's mourning for his father, Ariel continues:

Full fathom five thy father lies (I, 2).

Later, Ariel warns Gonzalo of the plot against him, singing:

While you here do snoring lie,
Open-eyed conspiracy
His time doth take:
If of life you keep a care,
Shake off slumber, and beware:
Awake! awake! (II, 1.)

Likewise, Caliban carries on the spirit of the scene and reveals his own nature in his drunken songs:

Farewell, master; farewell, farewell.
No more dams I'll make for fish;
Nor fetch in firing
At requiring,
Nor scrape trenchering, nor wash dish.
'Ban, 'Ban, Ca—Caliban,
Has a new master—get a new man. (II, 2.)

VII

Aside from this growing sense of the unity of music with the drama, I cannot find that Shakespeare, as a musician, was influenced by the concerns of the professional musician of his time. As I indicated at the outset, his interest in music was that of an observant, retentive-minded Elizabethan gentleman. His knowledge of music, phenomenal as it may appear to us, was the popularly current knowledge of his society and time.

I suspect that Emerson's observation, that great men confide themselves with child-like trust to the genius of their own age, has been evoked by more than one student who has just looked up from an intensive study of his Shakespeare. Shakespeare belongs to the ages, because, for one reason, he was so thoroughly child of his own age. The minutiae of his age lie reflected in those of his works that seem most nearly ageless, and he has escaped the yoke of the temporal by a whole-hearted absorption in the temporary. This has all been pointed out voluminously. Shakespeare's plots, Shakespeare's craft, Shakespeare's theatre, Shakespeare's language, and a dozen other aspects of his art, have been shown to be superficially like that of his contemporaries. The essential Shakespeare lies, it seems, somewhere in the use he made of stuff, musical and other, his generation put into his hands.